

MORPETH
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL
REPORT

For the Year 1920,

BY THE

Medical Officer of Health

(J. P. PHILIP, O.B.E., M.D., D.P.H.)

AND


The Sanitary Inspectors

(A. ADAMS, A.S.I. & H. WALKER, R.S.I.)

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Morpeth Rural District Council.

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND SANITARY CONDITIONS FOR THE YEAR 1920.



GENTLEMEN,

We have not yet, after over two years since the armistice, returned to normal conditions altered by the war. Indeed we are in a more critical condition than ever we have been owing to unrest in difficult adjustment of labour conditions. My report therefore will deal entirely with the vital conditions, and the important Sanitary state of the district resulting from altered circumstances since the Great War, as well as the results of the enforced delay in many schemes in drainage, water supply, and building. The nation in debt to some thousand millions, forgot that a nation as well as "a man must sit down and count the cost." The Utopia idea of garden cities at a subsidised rent is in itself wrong. Every industry must pay its own way. This I say outside any politics, is essential for the progress of any industry.

Population.—We are told by the Registrar General to estimate the population at 14,800 for both Births and Deaths. This I consider is much below the actual population. Our houses number 3,004, and overcrowding is very serious having risen to nearly 8 persons per house, so that if we estimate the population at 7 times the number of houses, we get a population of 21,028. In the 1911 Census, the population was 17,383. There must therefore be some mistake, and I consider that to-days population must be over 18,000 if not considerably more. However, my estimates must be made on the Registrar's figures.

The number of houses inspected was over 1,000 ; dairies and cow-sheds, 47 ; slaughter houses, 20 ; bakehouse, one ; and to other workshops, 51 ; 65 houses were disinfected. Notices were served in the following instances :—Eight cases of nuisances existing at Chevington Whitefield, arising from full and foul ashpits and privies.

Structural changes have been carried out in Longhirst Colliery houses.

The Housing Committee has had great difficulties to contend

with in supplying new houses. Estimates cannot be given. Plans and estimates may be drawn out one week and repudiated the next. In spite of these difficulties, plans have been made and passed for the erection of 100 houses at Pegswood, 60 at Ellington, 70 at Widdrington, 60 at Whitefield, Chevington, 100 at Broomhill, 60 at North Seaton, 60 at Linton, 2 at Thirston, 3 at Longhorsley, 2 at Netherwiton, 2 at Hartburn, 3 at Meldon Park Corner, and plans have been drawn out for others at Lightwater, Dunces House, Benridge, and at Gubeon, and at Cambo.

These houses are urgently required to relieve the overcrowding in the colliery districts. At Thirston and Pegswood some houses are almost completed, and so far nothing has relieved the overcrowding which still stands at the alarming figure of 7·3 persons per house. To relieve this and to keep up a constant supply requires over 770 new houses.

The most congested areas are: Stobswood, Widdrington, Chevington, and Broomhill to the north, and North Seaton and Pegswood to the south. The long deferred sewage disposal to the sea in the northern districts has been started. Also the supply of water from the Hebron Hill reservoir is to receive a supplementary supply from Fenrother where boring has resulted in a good head of water which will gravitate to join the Hebron supply, and on the way will give good water to Fenrother, Tritlington, and Ulgham, whilst the joint supply will, if we receive Government support, go to Stobswood, Widdrington, and its new houses, to Chevington, Broomhill, and Chevington Drift. This will, if we receive the Government's sanction for a loan be of enormous advantage to the district.

During the year along with the Government's Inspector, I have gone over most of the houses in North Broomhill, South Broomhill, Widdrington, Stobswood, Longhirst, and Pegswood, and have given special reports as to conditions found in those villages. Many of the houses in those areas are of a similar type, built about 40 years ago, and are badly constructed and with no ventilation in the upper rooms. Pantries are left open to the invasion of flies which breed in the ash pits not 5 yards distant.

My report on Pegswood is applicable to the other villages and may be included in this report. I made the inspection with the local representatives on the board and repeated the inspection with the Government Inspector. It briefly was as follows:—

Accompanied by the representatives of the Council in Pegswood, I visited and inspected that village (on May 20th). In some cases the delapidation is as bad as any in the district. The open channel system for draining all the old rows of houses is bad and in a great many places offensive and broken down.

PORTLAND PLACE—These are a bad type of two-roomed houses—all

have damp walls, the upper rooms which are reached by a ladder, have no fire-places ; the windows do not open, and there is no ventilation. The houses are clean and well kept. There is no cement footpath to privies and ashpits, and this causes much dirt to be carried into the houses. There are sculleries provided with windows composed of open slats, with no protection from flies. This is the case in all the old houses in the village.

CAVENDISH PLACE.—The houses here are three-roomed, one on the ground-floor and two up-stairs, reached by a step-ladder. All the walls are damp. The lighting is bad, and the windows open by sliding.

HOWARD COTTAGES.—Three-roomed : one on ground-floor, and two above. The windows are low, but slide open - walls are damp.

SPENCER PLACE.—Three-roomed houses : ground-floor, kitchen very damp ; two rooms up-stairs, no ventilation ; no paved footpath. Many of these houses are very damp, and the kitchens in many cases are below the ground level, and are apt to be flooded. The spouting is defective or wanting. These houses want immediate repairs.

DE WALDEN PLACE. - These are two-roomed houses of a very old type. Pit-falls have upset the walls and floors. The kitchens are below the level of the gardens

LONGHIRST TERRACE. - Three-roomed houses of the worst type. All the walls are bad and damp. The ceilings are down in many cases. In some cases bricks can be lifted out of the walls. The pantry accommodation is very open and delapidated. The lower half of this row is the worst in the village. The three lowest houses are apt to be flooded as the gully at the end is not large enough to carry away heavy rain floods. In one such floor the floor of the last house was six inches under a flood of sewage. These are not fit for human occupation.

BOTHAL TERRACE.—These are three-roomed houses in bad condition ; very damp walls and floors. Since I made this report a great many minor improvements have been made, walls have been repaired, spouts are being put in order, the drains are better kept, and ashpits are more regularly cleaned. Many more improvements have been promised as well as a new sewerage system.

The Government Inspector commenting on my report says “Briefly, the defects and sanitary deficiencies extend from the lack of sufficient drainage to the almost absolute lack of through ventilation, and from absence of the most necessary domestic facilities, and demands of common decency, to the possession of conveniences, etc., which are totally unsuitable and a positive source of danger.

“Nearly every factor which militates against health in housing exists in these houses.”

In the early part of the year I accompanied the Government Housing Inspector over the houses which I have from time to time reported to be in a bad condition.

LONGHIRST COLLIERY.—I need not go into details here as the houses are being put into a temporarily good condition so as to relieve congestion.

STOBWOOD WOOD ROW.—These houses he condemned entirely. They are one-roomed houses with a loft. In some cases these lofts are used as bedrooms, which had been entirely forbidden.

WIDDRINGTON BUS ROW.—These houses were not considered so bad, but the want of ventilation in the upper rooms he entirely condemned. This could be remedied by putting in sky-lights which would open.

WIDDRINGTON COLLIERY VILLAGE.—The same applies to these houses, and there is a good deal of overcrowding.

SOUTH BROOMHILL.—The Wood Row he considered unfit for habitation, and several other houses in this area he utterly condemned.

NORTH BROOMHILL, Stone Row.—These houses he considered the worst in the district. They consist of one room each, and there is much overcrowding. He thinks they should be turned into two-roomed houses as they were originally. He recommended that as soon as Government sanction for a loan was obtained, new houses should be built at Widdrington so that Stobswood Wood Houses should be demolished, and the Stone Row houses at North Broomhill should be converted into two-roomed houses. The site at Widdrington must be secured as soon as possible, to relieve the congestion in this area.

I may add that on the whole he considered the housing accommodation in the district was good and rather above the average.

The great Sewerage System has at last been started, but uncertain labour and changed value of contracts even now delay matters, and fresh enquiries are being made.

The New Sewerage System at North Seaton is now fairly begun, and will improve this village greatly. The building and enclosing paved yards to each house, the newly tar macadamised road and other things done here has effected a vast improvement. It will also be necessary to take into consideration building a new dairy farm. The old steading will not last long and has some serious defects.

The New Water Supply running in much the same lines as the drainage has also had a Government inquiry, and uncertainty remains. Besides the Tynemouth supply a supplement has been recommended from a Borehole at Fenrother, which promises an excellent and copious supply.

The Scavenging of the district has on the whole been satisfactory.

Sites for an Infectious Hospital have been inspected, and two have been recommended to the Committee. One on a neighbouring site to the Smallpox Hospital and the other at Morpeth Moor. The Government, to cut down expenses, has recommended central hospitals for several districts in combination, and again, things are at a stand still. As early as possible an infectious hospital must be had whether in combination or for the Council's own use.

VITAL STATISTICS.

BIRTH RATE.—The number of births registered during the year was 445 (239 males, 206 females). This is equal to rate of 30 per 1000.

DEATH RATE.—The total number of deaths in the district including the Asylum was 340. Excluding the Asylum the number was 206 (134 deaths in the Asylum). This gives a total death rate of 22.2 per 1000, and in the district itself a rate of 13.9 per 1000 (10.2 would be more correct.)

THE INFANTILE DEATH RATE. The number of deaths amongst children under 1 year was 35 (3 being illegitimate) which is equal to a rate of children born in the district of 114.1. This is the second lowest number recorded, but as the population is much underestimated the rate seems out of all proportion.

PULMONARY TUBERCULOSIS.—The number of cases was 10 which gives a rate per 1000 of 0.60.

The following table shows the six important diseases :—

Diseases.	1919.		1920.	
	No. of Cases.	Rate per 1000.	No. of Cases.	Rate per 1000.
Pulmonary Phthisis ...	14	0.89	10	0.60
All Tubercular Diseases ...	18	1.2	18	1.2
All Respiratory „	35	2.3	40	2.7
Cancer ...	18	1.2	14	0.94
Infectious Diseases ...	27	1.7	7	0.47
Diarrhoea (under 2 years) ..	2	0.13	4	0.27

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

In the Morpeth Rural District apart from the Asylum, 144 infectious cases have been notified which is about the average, as Measles is now

not notified. In the Asylum there have been 56 cases notified, all of which are tubercular diseases.

The cases in the district are . —

Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	...	37
Scarlet Fever	...	..	...	...	...	65
Erysipelas	...	...	...	...	...	12
Tuberculos Meningitis	...	...	...	...	...	3
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	...	14
Other Tubercular Diseases	...	...	...	...	...	5
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	...	...	...	...	...	4
Enteric Fever	..	..	...	...	...	0
Malaria	...	...	...	..	...	3
Cerebro Spinal Meningitis	...	...	...	...	...	1
Encephilitis Lethargica	...	...	...	...	...	1

There has been no serious epidemic. The only places threatened were Pegswood and Broomhill, but in no case was it serious. There were only seven deaths from Infectious diseases. So that it cannot be said that there was any serious outbreak.

The following table shows the distribution of the diseases including the Asylum, also the causes of death and the Sanitary Inspector's Report.

I am, yours obediently,

J. P. PHILIP.

TABLE I.
Causes of Death in Morpeth R.D., 1920.

CAUSES OF DEATH.	Males.	Females.
Civilians only.—All Causes...	112	94
Enteric Fever ... ..	...	...
Small-pox .. ..	...	...
Measles ... ..	...	...
Scarlet Fever ... ..	...	1
Whooping cough	2	...
Diphtheria and croup ... ..	...	1
Influenza	2	1
Erysipelas	1	...
Pulmonary tuberculosis	6	4
Tuberculous meningitis	1	2
Other tuberculous diseases	2	3
Cancer, malignant disease	7	7
Rheumatic fever ... ..	...	...
Menengitis	1	3
Organic heart disease	13	10
Bronchitis... ..	2	7
Pneumonia (all forms)	12	5
Other respiratory diseases	2	2
Diarrhoea, &c. (under 2 years).	2	2
Appendicitis & typhlitis	1	1
Cirrhosis of liver ... ..	...	1
Alcoholism	2	...
Nephritis and Bright's disease	3	5
Pueperal fever ... ..	...	1
Parturition, apart from pueperal fever ... ..	...	2
Congenital debility, &c.	8	7
Violence apart from suicide	7	...
Suicide	1	...
Other defined diseases	36	29
Causes ill-defined or unknown	1	...
Special Causes (included above) ... ..	...	...
Cerebo-spinal fever ... ..	...	...
Poliomyelitis .. ..	...	...
Deaths of infants under 1 year of age. TOTAL	20	15
Illegitimate	2	1
TOTAL BIRTHS	239	206
Legitimate	223	195
Illegitimate	16	11
POPULATION (For births and deaths.)	14,800	
GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, SOMERSET HOUSE, LONDON, W.C. <i>April, 1921,</i>		

TABLE II.
Birth-rate, Death-rate, and Analysis of Mortality during the Year 1920.

(Provisional figures. Provisional populations estimated to the middle of 1920 have been used for the purposes of this Table. The mortality rates refer to the whole population as regards England and Wales, but only to civilians as regards London and the groups of towns.)

	BIRTH- RATE PER 1,000 TOTAL POPULA- TION.	ANNUAL DEATH-RATE PER 1,000 POPULATION.										RATE PER 1,000 BIRTHS.		PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL DEATHS			
		All Causes.	Enteric Fever.	Small-pox.	Measles.	Scarlet Fever.	Whooping cough.	Diphtheria.	Influenza.	Violence.	Diarhoea and Enteritis (under 2 Years.)	Total Deaths under One Year.	Deaths in Public Institutions.	Certified Causes of Death	Inquest Cases.	Uncertified Causes of Death.	
England and Wales	25.4	12.4	0.01	0.00	0.19	0.04	0.11	0.15	0.28	0.48	8.3	80	24.3	92.2	6.6	1.2	
96 Great Towns, including London (Census Populations exceeding 50,000.)	26.2	12.5	0.01	0.00	0.22	0.04	0.14	0.16	0.31	0.43	10.4	85	31.3	92.2	7.1	0.7	
148 Smaller Towns (Census Populations 20,000—50,000).	24.9	11.3	0.02	0.00	0.19	0.03	0.10	0.14	0.27	0.38	7.8	80	16.5	93.2	5.3	1.5	
London ...	26.5	12.4	0.01	0.00	0.22	0.05	0.17	0.22	0.30	0.47	9.5	75	46.8	91.2	8.6	0.2	
Morpeth Rural District	30.0	13.9	0	0	0	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.37	0.27	35	39.4	97.5	2.35	0	

TABLE III.

DISTRICT.	Scarlet Fever.	Erysipelas.	Diphtheria.	Cerebo-Spinal Meningitis.	Encephalitis. Lethargia.	Pulmonary Tuberculosis.	Other Tuber- cular diseases.	Malaria.	Ophthalmia Neonatorum.
Pegswood	15	..	21	..	..	1	..	..	..
Broomhill	16	4	8	..	..	3	2	2	2
Chevington	4	1	4	1	..	3	..	..	..
Widdrington	13	2	2	..	..	1	2	..	..
North Seaton	9	3	2	..	..	..	..	..	..
Stobswood	1	1	..	..	..	2	..	..	..
Ellington	1	1	..	..	..	2	1	..	..
Ferneybeds	2	..	..	..	1	1	..	1	1
Cresswell	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Ulgham	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Sheepwash	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Longhorsley	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Throphill	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cutters Buildings	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Woodhorn	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..
Bothal	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..
Coneygarth	..	..	1	..	..	51	5	..	..
Asylum	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	67	12	37	1	1	65	10	3	4

TABLE IV.
Cases of infectious diseases notified during the Year 1920.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.	NUMBER OF CASES NOTIFIED.								TOTAL CASES NOTIFIED IN EACH LOCALITY.		
	At all Ages.	At Ages — Years.							1 Colliery	2 Agricultural	3 Asylum
		Under 1.	1 and under 5 years	5 and under 15 years	15 and under 25 years	25 and under 45 years	45 and under 65 years	65 and upwards.			
Diphtheria	37	...	8	26	...	1	2	...	37	...	...
Erysipelas	12	...	...	2	...	6	3	1	12	...	...
Scarlet fever	67	1	11	50	1	4	...	...	65	2	...
Cerebro Spinal meningitis	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...
Encephalitis Lethargia...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	65	...	...	...	3	8	3	...	14	...	51
Other Tubercular diseases	10	...	2	1	...	2	...	...	5	...	5
Malaria	3	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	3	...	...
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	4	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	...	...
Totals	200	5	21	80	7	21	9	1	142	2	56

Sanitary Inspector's Annual Report

(Sanitary Officers Order, 1910, Art. XX)

	DISTRICT.	HOUSING.						WATER SUPPLY		DRAINAGE			SANITARY CONDITIONS
		Structural defects	Nuisances	Overcrowding	Unfit for Human habitation	Defective Spouting	Dampness	Insufficient	Unsatisfactory	Foul	Untrapped or dilapidated	Insufficient	Structural defects
Number of Inspections made ...	E	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	...	...
	W	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	2	22
Number of Defects or contraventions of bye-laws found ...	E	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	...	...
	W	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Number of Defects, etc., outstanding from previous year ...	E	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	W	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Number of informal notices by inspector ...	E	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...
	W	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	22
Number of defects or contraventions remedied after informal notice..	E	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	...	...
	W	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	22
Number of statutory notices served by Local Authority ...	E	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	W	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Number of defects or contraventions remedied after statutory notice	E	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	W	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	...	...	...	...	...

rt, 1920.

16.)

RY N- ES	Foul	Dairies and Cow- sheds.	Slaughter Houses	Common Lodging Houses	Offensive Trades	Bakehouses	Other Workshops	Nuisances from keep- ing of animals	Paving of yards	Other nuisances	TOTALS
	11	140	60	.....	.....	4	172	.....	.....	.....	391
	2	30	20	... ..	.....	...	30	.....	.....	.....	89
	11	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	15

	2	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	9
	11	.....	—	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	15
	2	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	8
	8	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	8

WORK EFFECTED.

PRIVY ASHPITS.

Abolished	...	...	...
Roofed over	...	...	...
Repaired	...	...	2
W.C's. Substituted	...	...	3
Ashclosets	„	...	...

DRAINAGE.

New Drains provided	...	2
Defective drains relaid	...	2
„ repaired	...	2
New traps provided	...	...
Inspn. chambers provided	...	...

WATER SUPPLY.

Wells closed	...	...
Piped supplies provided	...	10
No. of houses affected	...	19

DISINFECTION.

Houses disinfected ..	E 61
„	W 4
Schools	...

UN SOUND FOOD.

Seized	...	...
Surrendered	...	...

RIVER POLLUTION.

Instances remedied	...	...
S. D. Works provided	...	...

OTHER MATTERS.

